



Municipal Wastewater

Methane is produced when the organic material in municipal wastewater decomposes anaerobically. Varying amounts of methane are emitted during the collection, handling, and treatment of wastewater depending

on methods employed. A number of techniques can be employed to reduce or recover and use wastewater methane that can yield substantial energy, economic, environmental, air quality, and public health benefits.

Forming New Subcommittee and Taking a Leadership Role

In October 2011, GMI officially added the Municipal Wastewater Subcommittee as its fifth sector subcommittee. Previously, EPA played an active role in the Wastewater Task Force, and volunteered to serve as a co-chair of the newly formed subcommittee.

As a co-chair of the new GMI Municipal Wastewater Subcommittee, EPA is actively engaged in supporting the subcommittee's initial activities:

- **Developing sector action plan.** The sector action plan will lay out the specific activities and strategies that the Municipal Wastewater Subcommittee will undertake to promote methane reduction and use.
- **Once the sector action plan is developed,** EPA will formulate a U.S.-specific Wastewater Action Plan.
- **Developing sector fact sheet.** The sector fact sheet will summarize the focus and scope of the new municipal wastewater sector as well as describe the activities that the subcommittee envisions undertaking.
- **Planning and coordinating subcommittee events.** EPA is actively involved in planning and coordinating 2012 Municipal Wastewater Subcommittee events.

Participating in Wastewater Events

Brazil

At the invitation of the Brazilian Association of Sanitary and Environmental Engineering, Rio de Janeiro Chapter, EPA presented on "Opportunities to Use Biogas, Heat & Energy at Sewage Treatment Plants" in June 2011. This presentation focused on studies analyzing the opportunities to utilize biogas, heat, and energy at sewage treatment plants in the United States and included a discussion of potential applications internationally. More than 200 participants from across Brazil and Latin America were in attendance. Other topics covered during the seminar included energy management, energy efficiency, and improved water management.

Chile

In October 2011, EPA presented on biogas recovery opportunities within the wastewater sector at a seminar

sponsored by the Biotechnology Nucleus Curauma of the Catholic University of Valparaiso and the Autonomous University of Mexico. EPA was invited to participate in this seminar, both to present on biogas utilization opportunities as well as to gain insights into existing Latin American initiatives focused on GHG mitigation from this sector.

The Netherlands

At the Sixth International Symposium on Non-CO₂ Greenhouse Gases, EPA led a panel discussion addressing global opportunities to reduce methane emissions from wastewater treatment plants. The panel included an overview of GMI's focus within the sector and was followed by private sector presentations focused on anaerobic digesters, as well as overviews of methane capture and use opportunities in Brazil and across Latin America.